

Lent Day 25

Wednesday March 14, 2018

Reading: John 13:1-20

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

² The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

Reflection

I was a pretty lazy kid. If I had my preference I would have chosen to lay on the couch watching tv or movies. That carried into my adulthood as well. Of course, I couldn't just lay there, either as a kid or an adult. Households need things done and every member of a family needs to contribute to the household. There were particular jobs that I hated, for example I hated taking out the garbage. I would have to almost drag it down the block to the garbage room. Often it would be leaking so I had to try to keep it away from myself, and not always successfully. This was quite literally a chore — it wasn't service. I'm a little ashamed to say that same attitude carried on into my adulthood too. It was a kind of woe is me sort of attitude. Why do I have to do all the crappy jobs?

Well, crappy jobs are not new. In this passage of John's gospel we have Jesus washing the disciples' feet. This was typically a job that a household slave would do. It was generally considered disgusting since, due to the dusty roads, people's feet would be completely filthy. But, it was also a key part of hospitality so that even if a slave wasn't available then the next 'lowest' person should perform it for the 'betters.' Jesus flips the whole tradition on its head and he, the master, washes the feet of his disciples and even though only Peter objects, we can take his objection as representative to the group. So, why does Jesus do this?

Look at the section I pulled out. I was struck by the author's repeated use of what Jesus knew. I think this is the answer to the above question. Jesus knew who he was. There was nothing left to be afraid of, no fear of shame or humiliation because he had already taken those up as his mission. More importantly he knew he had come to serve, so he did. Jesus tells us to follow his example and to serve each other. We can do this so it's not a chore and is true service because we have been made children of God. We know we have because we can cry out by the Spirit, "Abba, Father." This means we know, like Jesus, who we are and as a result we can follow our master's example and serve one another in love.

Prayer

Servant God, thank you for cleaning, not only our feet, but our hearts as well. Forgive us for the times when we grumble about needing to do things for others. This is a mark of our pride and our selfishness. Help us to have the same mind of Christ, knowing who you have made us to be so we might serve one another in love. Amen.